

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6165

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

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AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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PASS COMMERCE, EXIMBANK AND FAA

E O 11652: NA

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SUBJ: CIVAIR: SWISSAIR FLT PLANS AND AIRBUS

REF: 77 BERN 4996 (NOTAL)

1. WE UNDERSTAND FROM ERICH GEITLINGER, SWISSAIR
VP FOR CORPORATE PLANNING, THAT POSSIBLE AIRBUS
ACQUISITION IS UNDER CONSIDERATION AS PART REPLACE-
MENT FOR SIX DC-8 AIRCRAFT WHEN RETIRED BY 1983 OR
1984 AT LATEST DUE TO SWISS NOISE REGULATION.
SWISSAIR PLANS BUY DC-10 OR B-747 TO REPLACE DC-8
ON PEKING ROUTE BY 1980. FIVE OTHER DC-8 ARE
USED ON ROUTES TO AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST. DECISION
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WILL BE TAKEN BY END THIS YEAR FROM AMONG SIX
CANDIDATE AIRCRAFT: AIRBUS B-4; AIRBUS B-10 (NOT
IN SERVICE); BOEING 767 (200 SEATS, NOT IN SERVICE);
DC-X-200 (TWO ENGINES, OVER 200 SEATS, NOT IN SERVICE);
DC-10-10 (SHORT RANGE); AND DC-10-30 (PROBLEM OF
HEAVY TAKEOFF WEIGHT).

2. INITIALLY AIRBUS B-10 APPEARED PREFERABLE BUT MIGHT BE TOO SMALL. AIRBUS B-4 WAS CONSIDERED TOO LARGE BUT IS STILL IN THE RUNNING; AN EXCELLENT AIRCRAFT, IT COULD MEET 7 PCT ANNUAL TRAFFIC INCREASE ON MIDDLE EAST ROUTES. SWISSAIR HOPES TO BE ABLE ELIMINATE SOME AIRCRAFT FROM CONSIDERATION FOR DC-8 REPLACEMENT BY END JUNE 1978.

3. GEITLINGER MENTIONED FOLLOWING TWO SCENARIOS SWISSAIR HAVE UNDER STUDY WHICH INVOLVE AIRBUS AS DC-8 REPLACEMENT:

A) PURCHASE 4 OR 5 B-10 FOR USE IN EUROPE AND PART OF MIDDLE EAST. PURCHASE 4 DC-10-30 FOR REST OF MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA.

B) PURCHASE 3 OR 4 B-10 FOR MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA. LIMITED NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL B-10 TO BE USED IN EUROPE PLUS SEVERAL DC-9-80 FOR EUROPE.

4. SWISSAIR PLANS INVEST SF 100 MILLION PER AIRCRAFT TO REPLACE DC-8; MIGHT BUY 8 OR 9 FOR TOTAL INVESTMENT UP TO SF 800 MILLION. FOREX SAVINGS COULD RESULT IN ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT PURCHASES. (NOTE: CURRENT EXCHANGE RATE SF 1.96 EQUALS ONE US DOLLAR. SWISSAIR ORDER OF 15 DC-9-80 AND TWO UNCLASSIFIED

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DC-9-51 AIRCRAFT AT EXCHANGE RATE SF 2.40 WOULD COST SF 743 MILLION; PAYMENT ON DELIVERY AT EXCHANGE RATE SF 2.00 WOULD BE SF 620 MILLION.)

5. SWISSAIR WILL SOON MAKE FINAL DECISION ON TWO ADDITIONAL LONG-HAUL AIRCRAFT; B-747 AND DC-10 BOTH IN CONSIDERATION. SWISSAIR EXPECTED SELECT DC-10 FOR DELIVERY IN 1980. WILL PROBABLY BUY TWO B-747 FOR DELIVERY 1982 AND 1983. SWISSAIR HAS NO PLANS TO BUY CONCORDE WHICH THEY FEEL WOULD BE UNECONOMICAL, EVEN ON SURICH TO NEW YORK ROUTE. WARNER

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